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Article

Japanese Soldier Writers and the American Postwar Purge of Militarists and Ultranationalists

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In January 1946, under the American Occupation of Japan, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) initiated a purge of Japanese militarists and ultranationalists. Distinct from the war crime trials, the purge was a uniquely ambitious program designed to limit the influence of wartime leaders and opinion makers in the postwar years. This paper examines the nature of the purge program, placing particular emphasis on the Public Information Media purge. By tracing the evolution of SCAP directives, it argues that Occupation authorities undermined their goal of creating a non-punitive and collectively-administered purge by turning it into a semi-judicial process in which individuals were targeted based on the weighing of evidence. This paper then looks to the experience of Public Information Media purgees—focusing in particular on soldier writer Hino Ashihei—and contends that the designation of writers was an ultimately subjective process that led to considerable confusion. While historians generally view the purge as having been a success, this paper takes a step in the opposite direction by suggesting that inherent contradictions in purge policy, along with its haphazard application, contributed in part to a muddled understanding of who was responsible for Japanese militarism and why they were or were not held accountable.

Keywords: American Occupation of Japan, SCAP, Purge, Wartime Writers, Hino Ashihei

In the late summer of 1938, Japan's leading newspaper, the *Asahi Shinbun*, promulgated the release of a new book called *Mugi to Heitai* (Barley and Soldiers). The page-width advertisement read, "A record of blood and gunpowder smoke born from the midst of actual battle!"¹⁾ Similar advertisements flooded Japan's news media and *Mugi to Heitai* soon sold over a million copies. The work would be the most famous to emerge from the conflict in China with its author, Hino Ashihei, becoming the war's representative soldier writer.²⁾ But then came military defeat; Japan surrendered, the Occupation began, and in the wake of war that made his career, Hino was purged. As is well known, postwar tribunals held throughout the Pacific spent years wallowing through political minefields, judicial farces, and unprecedented legal ground in determining the nature and the extent of Japanese wartime atrocities. Scholars have long studied these trials,

1) *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo), 21 September 1938, D1.

2) Donald Keene, "War Literature," in *Dawn to the West* (New York: Rinehart & Winston, 1984), 914.

focusing in particular on the Tokyo War Crime Tribunal. What has received far less attention is the purge: an American-designed operation that attempted to quickly and efficiently remove the influence of wartime leadership.³⁾ The Americans, specifically the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), believed that to build a new postwar democratic Japan they had to first destroy militarism in all its forms.⁴⁾ The purge was their chosen method. Yet, while Japan emerged from the Occupation as a demilitarized and stable democracy, purge policy left the nation with unanswered questions of wartime responsibility and accountability. This unintended result is particularly evident in the design and administration of the Public Information Media purge of wartime writers.

The purge—in particular the Public Information Media purge—has received little scholarly attention. There are several notable exceptions including an unpublished manuscript by John D. Montgomery (1953), a frequently-quoted work by Hans Beierwald (1959), and a more recent Japanese-language volume by Masuda Yorishi (1998), but these works are policy studies that fail to consider the experience of being purged. Conversely, while literary studies of purged writers such as Hino Ashihei are numerous, none attempt to critically examine the policies that led to their purged status.⁵⁾ The following aims to span the gap between policy history and literary history to more effectively grapple with questions of wartime accountability. It begins with policy.

The Japanese purge is unique in the history of wartime accountability on two levels. First, SCAP intended it to be non-punitive. Unlike the war crime trials or even German Denazification, questions of guilt, responsibility, and accountability were not part of its initial design. Second, the Americans decided to implement the purge administratively, not judicially. It had no due process, no hearings or testimonials, and only limited possibility for appeal. This too was distinct from the war crime trials, for the purge was not concerned with what individual Japanese did or did not do during the war. Rather, SCAP created a purge that would collectively remove all members of a designated rank or group from positions of public influence, prohibiting them not only from holding posts that they occupied during the war, but also preventing them from accepting any public or quasi-public position after the war.⁶⁾

SCAP issued their initial purge directive on January 4, 1946. Appealing first to the Potsdam Declaration, the directive instructed that seven categories of Japanese be removed and excluded

3) The purge discussed is the purge of public officials (*kōshoku tsuihō*) that began in January 1946 and lasted until the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951. It is distinct in policy and administration from the education purge that was initiated in May 1946 or the red purge that began in April 1949.

4) SCAP used the Potsdam Declaration (July 1945), the Cairo Conference Declaration (December 1943), the “Instrument of Surrender” (September 1945), and the Moscow Conference Declaration (December 1945) as the bases for the purge. John Pritchard, “An Overview of the Historical Importance of the Tokyo War Trial,” (Oxford: Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies, 1987), 8–9.

5) See bibliography for key Hino Ashihei studies.

6) “Removal of Ultrnationalists: The Political Phase,” *Political Reorientation of Japan: September 1945 to September 1948 (PRJ)* vol. 1, 20–21.

from public office. They were:

- A. War Criminals
- B. Career and Special Service Military Personnel; Special Police Officials; Officials of War Ministries
- C. Influential Members of Ultranationalistic, Terroristic, or Secret Patriotic Societies
- D. Persons Influential in Imperial Rule Assistance Association, Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society, etc.
- E. Officers of Financial and Business Concerns Involved in Japanese Expansion
- F. Governors of Occupied Territory
- G. Other Militarists and Ultranationalists⁷⁾

The directive defined each of the categories, but SCAP charged the Japanese government with interpretation and administration. The Japanese, however, were not permitted to alter the fundamental structure of the purge. When the Shidehara Cabinet received the initial directive, the members announced they would resign unless the Americans retracted the order. Douglas MacArthur responded by saying that if the Cabinet resigned, “Thereafter Baron Shidehara may be acceptable to the Emperor for reappointment as prime minister, but he will not be acceptable to me.”⁸⁾ This temporarily tamed the Cabinet, but a few weeks later they again tried to limit the purge by making it individualized rather than collective. MacArthur again prevented their move.⁹⁾ He and the General Headquarters (GHQ) believed that only through a collective categorical purge could favoritism and corruption be minimized while maximizing time and resource efficiency.¹⁰⁾ Nevertheless, while the ideal of a non-punitive and collectively applied purge would remain, reality soon differed.

It was a new ordinance, released in January 1947, that began to undermine the original character of the purge. Expanding the earlier directive, it supplemented “public office” with “public service,” a term that included in its definition writers, journalists, and other media personnel.¹¹⁾ They would be purged under the catchall “Other Militarists and Ultranationalists” category (Category G), which was designed to snare any undesirables who had evaded the other

7) “SCAPIN 550 – ‘Removal and Exclusion of Undesirable Personnel From Public Office,’” January 4, 1946, *PRJ* vol. 2, 484–485.

8) Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 267.

9) “Removal of Ultranationalists: The Political Phase,” *PRJ* vol. 1, 18.

10) John D Montgomery, “The Purge in Occupied Japan: A Study in the Use of Civilian Agencies Under Military Government,” Technical Memorandum ORO-T-48 (FEC) Chevy Chase, Maryland: John Hopkins University, Operation Research Office, 3 July 1953 (Unpublished Manuscript), 19.

11) Kenneth Dyke memorandum to the Chief of Staff (May 17, 1946), in “Removal of Ultranationalists: The Public Information Media Phase,” *PRJ* vol. 1, 59; “Cabinet and Home Affairs Ministry Ordinance No. 1 of 1947,” Promulgated on 4 January 1947, *PRJ* vol. 2, 508.

groups. The first interpretation of the category came in March when the Japanese government established five criteria for purging writers, artists, scholars, journalists, and other media personnel.¹²⁾ They were:

1. Person[s] who advocated aggression of militant nationalism, or actively contributed to such propaganda, or who through his political or philosophic doctrine laid down an ideological basis for the policies for the Greater East Asia, or New Order in the East Asia or policies of similar nature, or the Manchurian Incident, China Incident or the Pacific War.
2. Person[s] who advocated dictatorship or totalitarianism of the Nazi or Fascist pattern.
3. Person[s] who advocated the supremacy of the Japanese nation to be a leader of other nations or who cooperated actively with propaganda to the above effect.
4. Person[s] who persecuted or denounced liberals or anti-militarists for their liberal or anti-militaristic ideologies.
5. Person[s] who in any other way advocated or championed militarism or ultra-nationalism.¹³⁾

The belief was that those in media still had the power to “subvert the aims of the Occupation and mold the minds of the people for new wars of aggression.”¹⁴⁾ The challenge faced by SCAP was that collective categories based on military rank or public office were useless when it came to purging writers, publishers, film producers, and their like. To target media personnel, SCAP needed a policy that would extend into the private sector and remove those individuals who continued to “exercise power and influence behind the scenes.”¹⁵⁾ The solution, initiated in the spring of 1947, was to create a Public Information Media purge that would rely on a new system of provisional designation. Under the original system a simple questionnaire—essentially a background check—led to a self-incriminating purge; the new provisional designation system placed initiating power with investigation committees that targeted persons based on gathered evidence.¹⁶⁾ Once a provisional designee, an individual had thirty days to submit an appeal to the committee. If the person did not submit an appeal, or if the appeal was rejected, their designation shifted to an official purge status.¹⁷⁾

12) To prevent a potentially chaotic situation and stop designated persons from holding or contending for office, general elections were postponed until after administration of the purge began. The Japanese government issued their purge criteria on March 10, 1946 and elections were held on April 10, 1946. “Removal of Ultrationalists: The Political Phase,” *PRJ* vol. 1, 23.

13) “Cabinet and Home Affairs Ministry Ordinance No. 1 of 1947, Appendix I,” *PRJ* vol. 2, 518.

14) Kenneth Dyke memorandum to the Chief of Staff (May 17, 1946), quoted in “Removal of Ultrationalists: The Public Information Media Phase,” *PRJ* vol. 1, 59.

15) “Removal of Ultrationalists: The Political Phase,” *PRJ* vol. 1, 42.

16) Baerwald, 51.

17) *Ibid.*, 43.

The Japanese government established an Information Media Investigation Committee of six scholars who were charged with composing a blacklist of media organizations. In the process they also reviewed over 60,000 books published between 1937 and 1941—the years SCAP deemed critical to the growth of Japanese militarism—collecting evidence against several hundred individual writers.¹⁸⁾ Based on their findings, they provisionally designated 331 writers, of whom 285 were officially purged.¹⁹⁾ The committee took precautions in designating purgees, only targeting writers whose books survived the war. Nevertheless, the process was fundamentally subjective with many of the writers designated solely on the knowledge and experiences of the purge committee.²⁰⁾ The case of Hino Ashihei (1907–1960) illustrates just how subjective the process could be.

Hino made his name as a writer by winning the coveted Akutagawa Prize in 1937. Already in the Japanese army, the award earned him a quick promotion to the Army Information Corps (*Gunhōdōbu*).²¹⁾ Hino based his next novel, *Mugi to Heitai* (Barley and Soldiers) on his early experiences as a soldier on the China front. Stressing the accuracy of the book's content, he even claimed that it could have been entitled *Waga Senki*, or “my record of war.”²²⁾ Advertisers promoted the realism and sincerity of *Mugi to Heitai* and in a matter of weeks the success of the novel turned Hino into a national celebrity.²³⁾ Tsutomu Narasaki, writing in 1943, described the book's effect with the following:

This novel radiates an irresistible force, not only because in it the actual battle is described by a soldier fighting right on the spot, but because it is the work of a poet. The appearance of [*Mugi to Heitai*] created such enthusiasm that the war accounts or novels, which were more like studies, paled in comparison and almost disappeared. At the same time this work

18) “Cabinet and Home Affairs Ministry Ordinance No. 1 of 1947, Appendix I,” *PRJ* vol. 2, 519–525. The appendix specifies that the purge only be applied to the leadership from July 7, 1937 to December 7, 1941. The committee comprised of Okada Naro, Kunio Odaka, Ryoichiro Ota, Taiji Kameshima, Takezo Kaneko, and Toyoo Hori. The blacklisted organizations include 353 publishing houses, news agencies, motion picture companies, and radio broadcasting associations. *Ibid.*, 62.

19) “Investigation of Books,” (10 May 1947) file: Public Information Media Purge. Box 2057, RG 331, National Archives; “Explanatory note on the provisional designation of writers,” (January 1948 ?) Box 2057, RG 331, U.S. National Archives, 1–4; “The Public Information Media Phase,” *PRJ* vol. 1, 60. “List of Persons Submitted Counter-Evidences Against the Provisional Designation As Writer,” file: List of Provisional Designees Category “G” Economic Recommended Candidates. RG 331, U.S. National Archives; “Summary of Purge Statistics By Categories,” *PRJ* vol. 2, 564.

20) “Explanatory note on the provisional designation of writers,” 2–5.

21) Hino Ashihei, “Kaisetsu,” *Hino Ashihei senshū Dai Ni Kan* (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1958), 401–2.

22) Hino Ashihei, *Mugi to Heitai* (Tokyo: Kaizō, 1938), 3, 5.

23) *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo) began using the success of the book to further promote it, writing for example: “This is astonishing, a seemingly impossible fact. Reprinting on top of reprinting!! No matter how many reprints, bookstores all over the country are telling us that they are out. Believe it or not, this has continued for two months.” *Asahi Shinbun*, 22 November 1938, D1.

proved the social significance of a novel, namely the power of a book to penetrate the social masses. This one work has convincingly confirmed the fact that an outstanding work of fiction can move the hearts of an entire nation.²⁴⁾

Hino followed the success of *Mugi to Heitai* with *Tsuchi to Heitai* (Mud and Soldiers; 1938) and *Hana to Heitai* (Flowers and Soldiers; 1939). All three works are autobiographical, with each focusing on the everyday experiences of the rank and file of Japan's Imperial Army. Troop movement and overall battle strategy are mentioned only in passing and justification for Japan's presence in China is never discussed. Ideologically, Hino's writing is similarly vague. Although at times sentimentally patriotic, the texts are too melancholy to be considered propagative. In fact, prior to the war's end, *Mugi to Heitai* was translated into at least twenty languages—including Chinese, Czech, Burmese, French, German, Italian, Korean, Manchurian, Mongolian, Russian, Spanish, and multiple English translations—with most Western critics praising the book as an Eastern counterpart to Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*.²⁵⁾

Back on the home front, Hino's soldier trilogy triggered a media craze known as the "soldier boom" (*heitai būmu*), a label derived from the titles of the involved works. These included the most ambitious Japanese film production of the day, *Tsuchi to Heitai* (Mud and Soldiers); well over a dozen military songs, such as *Tabako to Heitai* (Tobacco and Soldiers), *Ume to Heitai* (Plum Blossoms and Soldiers), and *Fukuchan to Heitai* ([cartoon character] Fuku-chan and Soldiers); advertising campaigns for goods such as *Kanzume to Heitai* (Canned Items and Soldier); and copycat books with titles like Godō Sōshirō's *Uma to Heitai* (Horses and Soldiers) and Shōji Takeo's *Kagaku to Heitai* (Science and Soldiers). As an author, Hino continued to write prolifically for most of the war. His focus remained on the experiences of the common soldier and his reputation as the quintessential soldier writer endured throughout the conflict in China, the war for the Pacific, and finally in the struggle to defend the home islands.

With the end of the war Hino was convinced that his days were numbered. He believed, along with many in Japan, that the Allied forces would soon arrest and execute everyone of influence. To prolong his life he fled to his mother's hometown where he wrote what he thought would be his final essay, "*Kanashiki Heitai*" (Unhappy Soldiers).²⁶⁾ The work, appearing in the *Asahi Shimbun* less than a month after Japan's surrender, is an empathetic tribute to the same Japanese soldiers who were the focus of his wartime writing. In *Mugi to Heitai* Hino praised the spirit of the common soldier as that which went beyond "the mediocre feelings and thoughts of

24) Narasaki Tsutomu, "Soldier Writers of Japan," *The XXth Century* 2, no. 3 (March 1942), 217.

25) Ikeda Hiroshi, *Hino Ashihei Ron* (Tokyo: Inpakuto, 2000), 154; Sekikawa Natsuo, "Wasureyō to Sareta Kiroku Bungaku," *Tosho* (May 2001), 43. Of fifteen English-language reviews published in the late 1930s, only *Time* magazine found fault with Hino's soldier works, suggesting that the sole resemblance to *All Quiet on the Western Front* was that they both mentioned war. *Time* vol. 33 no. 87 (12 June 1939): 87.

26) Ikeda, 11–12.

ordinary people.”²⁷⁾ In “*Kanashiki Heitai*” he appeals to this same spirit, writing that Japan surrendered in spite of the moral supremacy of the Japanese soldier: “my heart’s belief in the greatness of the Japanese soldier remains unchanged ... I have thought for a long time that all Japanese must look up to their soldiers, and that those soldiers who lay in eternal rest should be the living and spiritual foundation of the Japanese people.”²⁸⁾ Only five days after the appearance of “*Kanashiki Heitai*,” SCAP issued a stringent and clearly defined 10-point “Press Code” that they applied to all publishing industries.²⁹⁾ Had Hino waited a few more days to voice his mind, his “final testament” would have never reached the public. But it did, and in doing so confirmed his wartime reputation as the voice of the common soldier.

It was not until May 1948 that Hino discovered his name among a list of provisional purge designees. He appealed his status within the allotted thirty days claiming that if his work warranted the purge, then all writers of the Army Information Corps should suffer the same fate.³⁰⁾ The purge committee responded by acknowledging that his writing had a humanistic bearing but nevertheless concluding that some of his work stressed the supremacy of the Japanese people, endorsed the war, and exalted a fighting spirit. In short, as a writer with far-reaching influence he had supported militarism and cooperated in its propagation.³¹⁾ The committee’s explanation specified four works, *Heitai no Uta* (Soldiers’ Song), *Teki Shōgun* (Enemy General), *Rikugun* (Army), and *Heitai no Chizu* (Soldiers’ Map). What distinguishes the works from Hino’s better-known wartime writing is that all four describe the battle for Bataan with the United States as the prime enemy. As to be expected, the stories offer one-sided half-truthful accounts of the Philippines Campaign. That said, they include little to warrant censure from a society that values free speech. At no point does Hino go beyond the cultural climate of wartime Japan to incite hate crimes or propagate violence in a way that would resemble the likes of Germany’s infamous wartime publisher Julius Streicher. In fact, one of the characteristics of Hino’s writing is that he is less concerned with demonizing the American enemy than he is with presenting an idealized image of the Japanese soldier, exaggerating his qualities and patriotic zeal. Hino wrote the children’s book *Heitai no Uta* (Soldier’s Song), for example, to help young Japanese understand that their nation’s soldiers were not only strong and brave, but that they also possessed a beautiful spirit.³²⁾ Similarly, in *Teki Shōgun* (Enemy General) he whitewashes the experience of Bataan in such a way as to make the reader believe that it was the Japanese soldiers who *saved* the defeated Allies from starvation by providing

27) Hino, *Barley and Soldiers*, 184.

28) Hino Ashihei, “*Kanashiki Heitai*,” *Asahi Shimbun* (Asahi Newspaper), September, 1945. also in Ikeda Hiroshi, 31.

29) SCAPIN 33, September 19, 1945. Ibid., 12.

30) “List of Persons Submitted Counter-Evidences Against the Provisional Designation As Writer,” U.S. National Archives; Shimane Kiyoshi, “Tsuihō Sareta Hitobito no Iibun,” *Shisō no Kagaku* no. 53 (August 1966): 37.

31) Imamura, 100.

32) Hino Ashihei, *Heitai no Uta* (1943), excerpted in Ikeda, 48.

them with food and provisions.

The primary purpose of the aforementioned “Press Code” was to prevent criticism of either SCAP or the United States. Although relatively lenient in its application, works that referred to Americans as the enemy were consistently censored, a hypocritical policy that Jay Rubin and others argue had the potential “to compromise the effectiveness of the Occupation reforms.”³³⁾ If the policy had been applied retroactively, as it was in an indirect way with the purge, it alone would have justified a censorship of Hino’s work. That said, Hino wrote his wartime books under a far more restrictive set of guidelines. In the immediate aftermath of the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge Incident, Japan’s Home Ministry prohibited any views that could be construed as being against the war or unfavorable to the military.³⁴⁾ As a member of the Army Information Corps, Hino was given an additional list of rules that included never describing a military loss, never alluding to any Japanese acts that might be conceived as criminal, and always portraying the enemy as worthy of contempt.³⁵⁾ Burdened with these requirements, Hino writes that censorship limited the fullness of his work to an extent that the typical Japanese reader was left in a state of unreasonable happiness.”³⁶⁾ In fact, authorities censored *Mugi to Heitai* (Barley and Soldiers) in twenty-seven places and Hino would later claim that censorship laws meant that he could write less than a tenth of what he would have liked to have said.³⁷⁾ Even so, as noted, critics in Europe and North America were—at the time of its writing—nearly unanimous in recognizing a pervasive humanism in *Mugi to Heitai*. After all, it was difficult to attack the “militarism” in a writer who penned passages such as the following:

It seemed ludicrous that pieces of steel and powder were able to stamp out precious lives with such impunity, and I often found myself seething with rage which I found hard to control. Years of worry, anxiety, and hope, had gone into bringing everyone of us to manhood; parents, wives, children, whom the men never tired of talking about and even dreamed of, longed for the day when their loved ones would return and with radiant hopes for the future; yet all this was wiped out in a second by a bullet or shell.³⁸⁾

Pearl Buck’s response to such writing was to claim that Hino’s books contained “no

33) Jay Rubin, “From Wholesomeness to Decadence: The Censorship of Literature under the Allied Occupation,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* vol.11 no.1 (Winter 1985): 71–103, 97.

34) For details, see: George J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

35) Hino Ashihei, “Kaisetsu,” *Hino Ashihei senshū* vol. 2 (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1958), 406–407.

36) Sekikawa, “Wasureyō to Sareta Kiroku Bungaku,” 44. The literal translation of the used expression “*hanahada kōfuku*” is “very happy.” However, the connotation is one of sarcasm.

37) Sekikawa, 44. Postwar editions of Hino’s wartime books include significant changes that he claimed—although without showing any hard evidence—had been part of the original texts prior to military censorship.

38) Hino, *Barley and Soldiers*, 129.

propaganda, no pompousness, no self-justification, none of the things we have come to expect about this war they are waging.”³⁹⁾ Nevertheless, a decade later, a new world situation required a rereading of his work. Hino Ashihei was no longer the Erich Remarque of the East; he was now an obstacle to Japanese democratization. How did he respond? Scholars of Hino agree that even while he continued to empathize with common soldiers, he never confessed any sense of guilt for his role in shaping their public image.⁴⁰⁾ Perhaps the closest he came was in his 1950 autobiographical novella, *“Tsuihōsha”* (The Purgee), with a train conversation between a former Japanese soldier and Hino’s old friend Onogi:

“How far are you going?” the soldier asked.

He was an older man, at least forty, part of the now demobilized army. His livid skin was covered with a pattern of malnutrition spots, and he was missing an unnatural number of teeth. Tenderly, he puffed on a cigarette.

“To [Kyushu],” Onogi replied. ...

“Kyushu, that’s where Hino Ashihei is, isn’t it?”

The soldier spoke as if recalling something. Onogi absorbed the words, all the while sensing a peculiar look in the soldier’s eyes. Truth be told, Onogi was on his way to see Hino. Knowing a variety of opinions that soldiers held of his friend Hino, Onogi recognized the look as unfavorable. And so, to avoid being included in the coming attack he evasively responded, “I believe you’re right.”

“Is he safe?”

“What do you mean ‘safe’?”

“He wasn’t arrested as a war criminal?”

“No.”

“Hmmm. Is that so.”

I saw a deep glare of resentment in the soldier’s hollow eyes.

He continued, “I hold a grudge against Hino. We read his books and believing that we could win this war went off and fought as hard as we could. And this is how it ends ...”

Onogi could not respond. As he reflected on the extent to which the enormous drive of war conditions the smallness of individual responsibility, ... the soldier mumbled, “It would have been great if that man had slit open his own belly.”⁴¹⁾

Hino did contemplate suicide. He later wrote, “I held a dagger to my body on the night of [August] seventeenth [1945], but my will not yet determined and so, with thoughts of lingering attachments, I put the blade down. Tears flowed unrestrained. Although I no longer cared for

39) Pearl S. Buck, “A Soldier in Japan,” *The New Republic* (7 June 1939), 99: 134.

40) For examples, see: Ikeda, 539, and Tanaka, 100.

41) Hino Ashihei, “*Tsuihōsha*” (1950), in *Hino Ashihei senshū* vol. 7 (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1958), 312–313. also in, Ikeda Hiroshi, *Hino Ashihei Ron* (Tokyo: Impakuto, 2000), 9–10.

this body that had many times lost its chance to die, I longed to see to the end of this day of imperial humiliation.”⁴²⁾ It was, in short, Japan’s defeat for which Hino felt responsible.⁴³⁾ But did defeat justify his purge? Fellow soldier writer Ozaki Shirō accepted such logic in his own purge, arguing that while his wartime writings were in keeping with his duty as a loyal subject, he understood that it was this same duty that now required him to sacrifice himself for the nation.⁴⁴⁾ Hino felt otherwise. “The era makes the hero,” he would write in “*Tsuihōsha*” (The Purge), “and then it changes. ... No matter how great a person’s character, one can never survive the storms of the age.”

Unlike Hino, there were those caught in the Public Information Media purge who successfully appealed their status. Ishikawa Tatsuzō is a prime example. As with Hino, Ishikawa won the Akutagawa Prize, propelling him to literary prominence. Also like Hino, his most significant work was based on the lives of ordinary soldiers. In 1937, just two years following the Akutagawa Prize, the monthly journal *Chūō Kōron* commissioned Ishikawa to write a novel on the war in China. He accepted the offer and reached Nanjing only weeks after the city surrendered, arriving in time to witness the ensuing madness. Returning to Japan, he quickly wrote a novella entitled *Ikiteiru Heitai* (Living Soldiers) for the March 1938 issue of *Chūō Kōron*.⁴⁵⁾ The story focuses on a single infantry unit involved in the battle for Nanjing. Wanting to show the soldiers as they were—not as the benevolent liberators that official sources presented them as being—led him to graphically describe their willingness to rape and kill Chinese civilians. The editors of *Chūō Kōron*, attempting to avoid government censorship, extensively edited the manuscript prior to publication. Nevertheless, on the eve of its publication, the authorities issued a prohibition on the work. Ishikawa was then tried and sentenced to four months imprisonment for “depicting the slaughter and pillage of noncombatants by ... the Imperial Armed Forces, and for writing things that disturb peace and order.”⁴⁶⁾ Yet, for all its gut-wrenching depictions, *Ikiteiru Heitai* does not criticize Japan’s presence in China. Ishikawa, like Hino, believed in the spirit of Pan-Asianism; while he recognized Japanese cruelty, he saw these acts as an inevitable consequence of an unavoidable war.⁴⁷⁾ As with Hino, Ishikawa received a

42) Hino Ashihei, *Sankyō Dokugo*, quoted in: Kido Hiroshi, *Kappa Yūshū: Hino Ashihei to Shōwashi no Jiku*, Tsurushima Masao Kikigaki (Fukuoka: Nishi Nihon Shinbunsha, 1995), 188.

43) Ikeda, 11.

44) Shimane, “Tsuihō Sareta Hitobito no Iibun,” 37.

45) Zeljko Cipris, “Radiant Carnage: Japanese Writers on the War Against China” (Ph.d. diss., Columbia University, 1994), 153–154. Cipris’ dissertation includes a complete translation of *Ikiteiru Heitai*. Haruko Taya Cook, “The Many Lives of Living Soldiers: Ishikawa Tatsuzō and Japan’s War in Asia,” in *War, Occupation and Creativity: Japan and East Asia, 1920–1960*, eds. Marlene Mayo and J. Thomas Rimer (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001) 149–150.

46) Cook, “The Many Lives of Living Soldiers,” 156, 162. The prison sentence was suspended.

47) Following the war, American prosecutors tried to use Ishikawa’s work as evidence of the Nanjing massacre. Ishikawa refused to cooperate on the basis that Chinese fighting tactics made the incident inevitable. *Ibid.*, 165–166.

provisional purge designation following the war. But unlike his fellow writer, Ishikawa escaped official purge status with a successful appeal. His exoneration resulted from the military's suppression of *Ikiteiru Heitai* and the absence of absolute militarism in his second wartime work, *Bukan Sakusen* (The Wuhan Operation).⁴⁸⁾

The Occupation had more to lose in purging Ishikawa than it had to gain. Ishikawa's postwar novels supported a non-romanticized view of Japan's war experience and *Ikiteiru Heitai*, finally published in early 1946, saw substantial success as a non-propagative portrayal of the war.⁴⁹⁾ It thus made sense to remove Ishikawa's purge designation, even if he had in some way supported the war effort. Clearly, the degree of one's support of Japanese aggression and the extent of one's influence on the general public became part of an unwritten code for purge designation. Had any of Hino's works been fully censored, had he been less influential during the war, or had he been a vocal supporter of the Occupation after Japan's defeat, it is likely that he too would have avoided official purge designation.

Of provisionally purged writers, only fourteen percent successfully appealed their status, escaping official purge designation.⁵⁰⁾ The others, removed from public life, understood that they were paying the price for having supported the war effort. Technically, the purge was impersonal and non-punitive. But for those targeted, the punitive nature of the purge was never in question. In fact, most Japanese failed to distinguish purgees from war criminals. The only difference between the two, according to public opinion studies, was the degree of punishment.⁵¹⁾ Yoshida Shigeru (1878–1967), Japan's Prime Minister and leading political figure for most of the Occupation, recognized the apparent contradiction between principle and practice. In his memoirs he writes that while SCAP wished the Japanese to "embrace liberalism and democracy, ... the 'purges' were also the expression of a desire on the part of the Allied Powers to retaliate on the leaders of the nation they had defeated."⁵²⁾ Opposing what he believed to be "arbitrary standards based upon a misreading of history," Yoshida repeatedly confronted SCAP on the issue of purge policy; MacArthur's penned responses were formulaic in its defense. A December 1946 letter reads, it "is not punitive; no one is adjudged guilty of any offense, nor is it intended that anyone be punished thereunder."⁵³⁾ Nearly four years later, in June 1950, MacArthur similarly wrote, "The guiding philosophy of [the purge] has been protective, not punitive."⁵⁴⁾ MacArthur and top SCAP officers wanted to limit purge discourse to democratization.

48) *Asahi Shinbun*, 15 May 1948.

49) Cook, "The Many Lives of Living Soldiers," 164.

50) "Summary of Purge Statistics By Categories," *PRJ* vol. 2, 564.

51) Montgomery, 17.

52) Yoshida Shigeru, *The Yoshida Memoirs: The Story of Japan in Crisis*, trans. Yoshida Kenichi (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1962), 147.

53) Douglas MacArthur, "Letter to Yoshida Shigeru, Prime Minister of Japan, December 26, 1946," *PRJ* vol. 2, 500.

54) Douglas MacArthur, "Press Release: The Following Letter from General MacArthur to Prime Minister Yoshida is Hereby Released to the Press, June 6, 1950," *History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the*

At no point was the implied guilt of the provisional designation system officially acknowledged. That said, the purge did have its non-Japanese critics. At the height of the Public Information Media Purge, Walter Butterworth, Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, questioned SCAP's democratization philosophy, challenging in particular the assumption that all Japanese who had adapted themselves to wartime Japan and participated in her expansion were inherently against democratization. He also saw the non-judicial removal of undesirable persons as being anti-democratic, writing: "Penalization of the large numbers of purgees whose only crime was to serve their country in time of war would not seem to be the best illustration we might be providing the Japanese of the benefits of impartial justice and respect for personal rights."⁵⁵⁾ SCAP's purge of wartime writers—a policy based on the belief that they were an obstacle to postwar democratization—clearly required a leap in logic. Nevertheless, it was this mindset that created the Public Information Media purge, and it was this same thinking that brought it to an end. Democratization's success meant that the purge was no longer needed.

Hino Ashihei's purge lasted thirty months. On October 13, 1950, SCAP freed Hino and 10,089 other Japanese from their dispossessed status. Their release followed the conclusion of an appeal board that the purges had been in "error."⁵⁶⁾ The same committee that rejected Hino's original appeal on the grounds that he had propagated militarism now ruled that even though Hino had a wide influence on the public, "he abided by his principle of humanism and tried to repel the prevailing trend of the times from his soldier's standpoint."⁵⁷⁾ The evidence for and against Hino remained unchanged. The soldier books that now exonerated him were the same works that the world had praised prior to the Pacific War and then condemned following Japan's defeat. But with Japanese militarism fading into the past and democratization firmly embedded, the measuring scale of wartime accountability realigned itself to meet the needs of the present. The scale now ruled in favor of Hino's humanistic qualities.

The purge embodied a moral collision between intent and result. It was designed to be collective (impersonal), preventative (demilitarization), and progressive (democratization); what it became was individualized and punitive. As a punitive measure, the purge raises questions of accountability, both real and imagined. To declare Hino Ashihei and other soldier writers victims of circumstance would be to undermine the creativeness that earned them their wartime prominence. Yet, to go to the other extreme and target soldier writers—for this is how their

Occupation of Japan, microfilm (1952).

55) W. Walton Butterworth Jr, "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) to the Assistant Secretary of State," 27 October 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948 vol. 6, Far East and Australia* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office), 649.

56) *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950: Volume IV, East Asia and The Pacific* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1976), 1337. Although SCAP de-purged 10,090 Japanese, nearly 200,000 remained under purge status. *Ibid.*

57) "Report on Examination Appeal," (28 June 1949) file: Appeals Board Decision on Prominent Cases. RG 331, U.S. National Archives. Although the appeal board made their decision in June of 1949, Hino was not notified of his de-purge until October 1950.

purge was ultimately interpreted—is to encourage a form of historical myopia in which the complexity of Japan’s wartime culture is reduced to categories of hero, villain, and victim. Hino was none of these. He was, after all, no more than a soldier writer whose work was reevaluated from the vantage point of a fickle and fleeting present. His books that had been the writings of a humanist became an anachronism that was incongruous to a defeated nation and inconvenient to an occupying foreign power. SCAP designed the purge for the benefit of a democratic future and administered the purge based on the sins of a militaristic past. These criteria were nevertheless trapped to the present and the belief that the construction of a new Japan required the destruction of the old. Like the war that spurred his reputation, Hino Ashihei’s status required that he be relegated to the past. When the new postwar history was secure and the purge of Hino was no longer a pragmatic necessity, Occupation authorities reversed their decision, admitted their “errors,” and freed him of his purge status. Hino Ashihei, voice of the Japanese soldier, no longer threatened a rewriting of the nation.

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